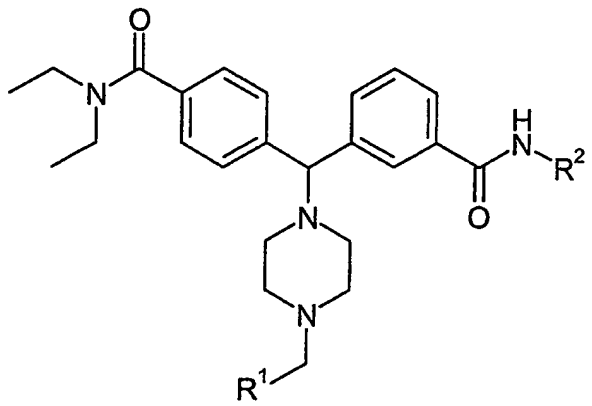
What is claimed is :

1. A compound of formula I, pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or mixtures thereof:



I

wherein

R^1 is an aryl, heteroaryl, substituted aryl or substituted heteroaryl; and

R^2 is hydrogen, optionally substituted C_{1-12}alkyl, optionally substituted C_{6-12}aryl, or optionally substituted C_{2-12}heterocyclyl.

2. A compound according to claim 1,

wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; triazolyl; pyrrolyl; thiazolyl; and N-oxido-pyridyl, optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

3. A compound according to claim 1,

wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and thiazolyl, optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

4. A compound according to claim 1,

wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and thiazolyl; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

5. A compound according to claim 1, wherein the compound is selected from:

3-[(4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl)(4-benzyl-piperazin-1-yl)methyl]benzamide;

3-{(4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl)[4-(2-furylmethyl)-piperazin-1-yl]methyl}benzamide;

3-[[4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl][4-(phenylmethyl)-1-piperazinyl]methyl]-N-methyl-benzamide; enantiomers thereof; and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

6. A compound according to any one of claims 1-5 for use as a medicament.

7. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the therapy of pain, or functional gastrointestinal disorders.

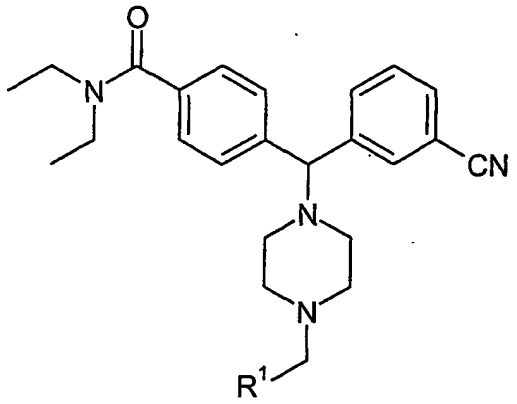
8. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5.

10. A method for the therapy of functional gastrointestinal disorders in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such

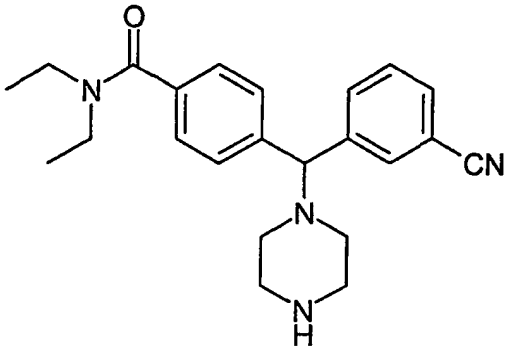
therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5.

11. A process for preparing a compound of formula II,



II

comprising of the step of reacting a compound of formula III:



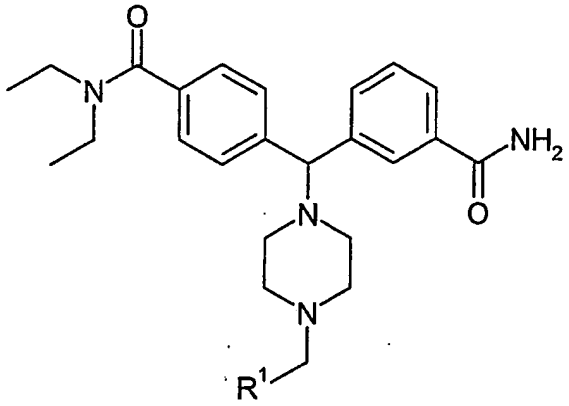
III

with R^1-CHO to form the compound of formula II

wherein

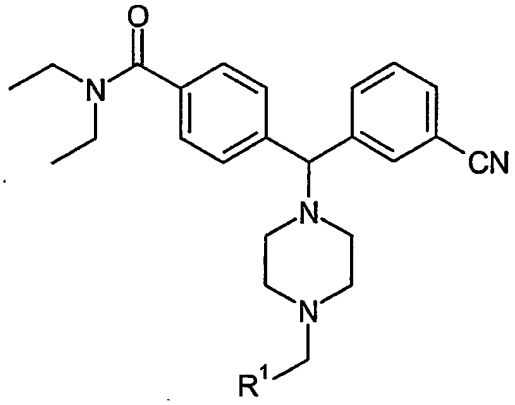
R^1 is an aryl, heteroaryl, substituted aryl or substituted heteroaryl.

12. A process for preparing a compound of formula IV,



IV

comprising: reacting a compound of formula II,



II

with an akali metal hydroxide in non-aqueous solvent to form the compound of formula IV:

wherein

R^1 is an aryl, heteroaryl, substituted aryl or substituted heteroaryl.